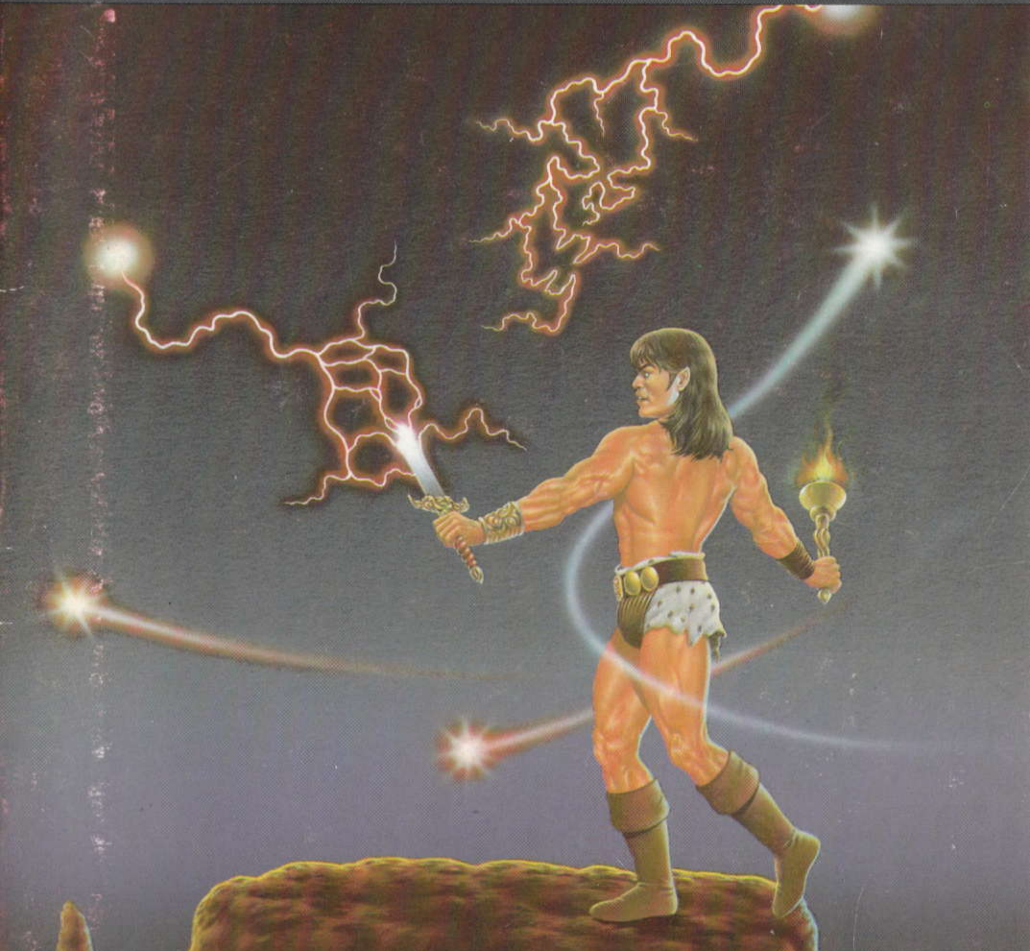
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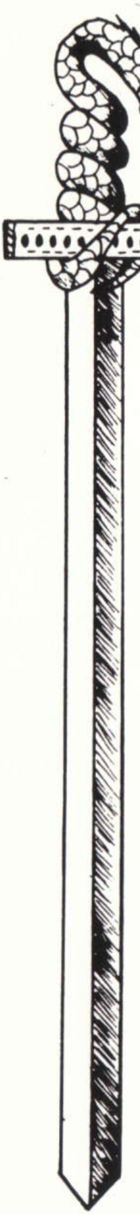
MANDRAGORE

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SUMMARY

SYRELLA'S QUEST

Christian BALLANDRAS



ENCOUNTER IN A TAVERN

The people in the village were stealing curious glances at the warrior clad in leather and steel, who was walking down the main street. For some of them it was the first time they had seen a warrior from the cold northern countries. The huge stature of the man, with his big muscles bulging from under his doublet, his icy-blue eyes and the bright gold of his long hair made an awe inspiring sight. Not to mention the massive sword beating on his hip and the large battle-axe that he carried on his back, strapped over his shoulder.

He entered the only tavern of the village ; several tipsy customers stood aside to let him make his way to one of the old wooden tables. He sat down and ordered a beer . For one moment his deep and sonorous voice echoed through the silence. Conversations stopped and everyone was covertly watching the newcomer. He was amused by the stealthy looks he felt resting on him, and his arrogant smile disclosed a strong set of teeth, like those of a carnivorous animal. But very soon the voices around him grew loud again. The gigantic fellow drank the frothy drink that had been set before him by the inn keeper down in one gulp and called for a bowl of beans. While eating he let his eyes roam over the hunting trophies decorating the thick stone walls, the goatskin wine bottles and the oversized hams hanging from the ceiling beams. Prominent on a shelf in a corner was an impressive leather-bound volume with the title "Skarg Bestiary, A Treatise of Local Demonology" "stamped in silver letters. This however was lost on the stranger who could not read. He regarded the drinkers around him contemptuously ; a colourless crowd of thick-set, and mostly podgy individuals. His interest lingered on a solitary figure seated at a nearby table. Obviously a traveller, he was wrapped in a long, loose, expensive-looking scarlet cloak. His fine aristocratic features were partly hidden by the hood pulled down over his head.

The warrior was pushing away his empty bowl with a sigh of satisfaction, when a group of rowdy armed soldiers made a noisy entrance into the tavern, each shouting louder than the other. They appeared to be in a fighting mood. They looked furtively at the two strangers. The one who seemed to be the leader walked up to the hooded traveller and, standing before him with his hands on his hips, said :

"Hey, you there ; I'll have you know that this table has been reserved for me !"

The mysterious stranger got up and said in a thin voice : "I wasn't to know. I am sorry. Anyway I was just going, so the place is yours if you want it." And he made for the door.

"Hold on, whippersnapper ! So you think you can get away with it ?" growled the sergeant, grabbing the shoulder of the traveller who shook him off sharply and took out, from the folds of his coat, a long knife which had a hilt inlaid with precious stones.

Immediately the troopers drew up around their chief. Seven menacing faces, seven armed fists were closing in on the purple-clad figure. The inn keeper attempted to calm down the roused tempers.

"Come now, soldiers, this noble lord is exhausted by a long walk, I am sure he did not mean to offend you..."

"Once drawn, the swords must be crossed!" The sergeant roared. "So the saying goes in my country, and..." A dull sound cut him short. The fair-headed warrior had suddenly laid down his axe on the table. Without getting up he said :

"A saying in my own country goes that the steel of his sword to a soldier is what wine is to the drunkard... I believe, troopers, that the goblet suits you better than the sword!"

His voice sounded like the snarl of a wild beast. His lip curled up on his white teeth like those of a wolf. There followed a moment of hesitation among the trouble-makers.

Unwilling to lose face with his men, their leader cried out:

"Would you repeat those words to my face?"

"If I walk up to you, as sure as my name is Torlinn of Rohnkreld also named Torlinn the Brute, your brains will redden the blade of my axe. Is that what you want?"

"Why, n...no", the other answered with a lowered head, "there is no sense killing one another over trifles."

"Well said!" Torlinn exclaimed. "Then you should go and sit at the table this noble lord has graciously offered to you."

The sergeant complied without a word, followed by his thugs. With a sarcastic smile on his lips, Torlinn got up to join the stranger.

"Shall we leave, friend? The stench of this place is intolerable." They went out, with eyes full of bitter hatred following them . As soon as they were in the street, the warrior of Rohnkreld murmured:

"You look quite mysterious, my Lord, wrapped up in those costly clothes. You know my name, may I at least know yours?"

The stranger pushed back his hood and with a gracious movement shook loose an abundant mass of jet-black hair. Astounded, Torlinn admired the contrast between the grey eyes in a delicate alabaster face and black hair spread over the red velvet of the coat.

"But... you are..."

"Yes, I am", she answered proudly. My name is Syrella, and I come from Lake Karashgoom. Barbarian, I need a man such as you to help me to carry out my plans. Would you work for me as a mercenary in exchange for a large amount of gold, of course?"

"Ye Gods, Dame Syrella, I was just trying to hire out my sword! Moreover, if there is adventure and danger in the bargain, I could ask for nothing better than to follow you!"

"There is sure to be some, and probably more than you expect, Torlinn... I shall explain to you while we make some purchases."

Together they walked up the street toward the shops.

THE MAGICIAN AND HIS SERVANT

They entered the village emporium, which was fragrant with spices. The shopkeeper was engaged in a bitter argument with two rather vindictive customers.

"What !", protested the taller of the two, a lean short-bearded character dressed in a tunic and blue breeches, "You charge fifty crowns for this miserable piece of parchment, you are joking, you scoundrel."

The other customer was a chubby, sallow-faced dwarf with a thick dark wooly head of hair, he kept repeating in a high-pitched voice :

"My master's right, my master's right !"



"But this document is invaluable." the shopkeeper claimed. "To my knowledge it is the only complete map of the Land of Kings from the Principality of Sillanault to the Dungeon of He-of-the-never-to-be-mentioned-name..."

"You are lying, there are many maps of this kind. Here are ten crowns, and consider yourself handsomely paid."

But the shopkeeper would not hear of it.

"Put down this parchment or..."

"Or ?" insisted the short-bearded man.

The shopkeeper rang a small bell, and almost immediately two impressive-looking henchmen armed with cudgels appeared from the backroom.

"Slaves", yelped the shopkeeper, "Get hold of this evil spirit who refuses to pay the set price."

The two ruffians came forward. Syrella look at Torlinn enquiringly, wondering whether he would interfere. But the barbarian had no time to even think of it. The stalwart slaves had not notice the diminutive wooly-haired person who had sneaked between their legs and slashed them behind the knees with two well-placed thrusts of a dagger.

"Help !" the shopkeeper bawled."Soldiers ! Help' quick !"

His howling turned into strange gurgles and then into a groan. The man in blue had taken a few blades of dried herbs out of his pocket and muttered an incomprehensible formula. Changed into swines, the master and his servants were running around the shop, upsetting jars and knocking over shelves. Torlinn broke into a sonorous laugh.

"Well ! It looks to me as if you are a first-rate magician, old man."

"Such are the prerogatives of the elfin race", the man answered. "The credit is not mine really... I was right not to let them get the better of me, wasn't I ?"

He examined the map he was holding in his hands more closely.

"Anyway this document is a forgery."

He crumbled it into a ball and threw it behind the counter, then took back his coins. Meanwhile the dwarf was bowing and scraping to Syrella and speaking through his nose, said :

"If you need anything, help yourself, Princess, this is all yours."

"My servant Podus is right", added the magician.

"This crook is no longer in a position to sell his wares, so we shall have them for nothing. Well now, if I may be allowed to introduce myself : my name is Gelth and my country Varax Forest."

"Ye Gods ! so we are neighbours !" Torlinn exclaimed.

He told him his name and so did Syrella. The four of them began to ransack the shop methodically, chatting at the same time. Gelth explained that he was looking for documents concerning the Land of Kings for he had long been dreaming of encountering He-of-the-not-to-be-mentioned-name . Syrella then made an attempt to have him join them. She told how her father had become a priest, dedicated to the worship of a sacred flame in a sort of temple, which was supposed to be built on a volcano but she did not know where. She longed to find him, if necessary she would scour all the countries within the Magic Montains. And for this purpose a magician would be of great use to her as well as a dwarf, in view of the well-known dexterity of their race.

Gelth hesitated, Syrella argued that to make his wild dream come true he would first have to discover the secrets of the Ten Castles of Mandragore. United, their chances of success would be far greater. And lastly her father, a wise man of high abilities, might be able to give them valuable help once he was found.

Gelth was finally persuaded. All the more so as Syrella promised him, as she had Torlinn, his weigt in gold and jewels if their search succeeded.

DEPARTURE

Outside the village, towards the end of the day, the four held a secret meeting in the darkness. They decided to depart immediately. They had all the necessary equipment with one exception, horses. Podus was chosen to return to the village and steal a few. Gelth insisted that he had a great ability were stealing was concerned like many of his kind.



Unfortunately even the most gifted thieves are not always lucky. One hour later Podus was seen coming back to camp out of breath. He was indeed holding four healthy mounts by the bridle, two of which were stocky ponies but he had barely escaped being caught and armed men were hard on his heels. The soldiers had no trouble reaching their campsite. At their head Torlinn saw the sergeant he had humiliated in the tavern. But this time he had about fifteen men accompanying him, their eyes ablaze, lusting for revenge.

"So, Barbarian, you are in league with this horse-stealing midget. And so is this female who was trying to pass herself off as a travelling nobleman."

"The other is a magician who turned Moras the merchant into a pig." another said.

"Attack them ! Death to the bandits !"

The soldiers rushed to the onslaught. The first to die was the sergeant. Torlinn's axe had split his body into two from the top of his head down to his chest. A few dispersed into the fields in the shape of fat pigs.

Others, whining, were flattened on the ground, hamstrung by the agile Podus. Syrella herself dispatched two of them with her sharp dagger. What was left of the troop was hacked to pieces by the axe and the sword of the warrior of Rohnkrled. But a short distance behind the armed men the whole village was following and they could hear them shouting :

"Here are the thieves !"

"Let 's tear their guts out !"

Torlinn wiped his sword and his axe in the grass and said :
"They outnumber us this time. We have our horses, let's get out of here."

Which they did.

SCARG FOREST

In the thickenning darkness, the black trunks of the giant pines looked all alike. But Torlinn could have sworn he had already seen this one, whose contorted bark suggested unholy scriptures, no more than a few minutes ago, when on their stolen mounts they had penetrated deep into the weird forest of Scarg, in order to escape the pursuing villagers. Gelth, riding ahead, pulled back his horse to keep abreast of the warrior. His eyes shone in the dusk, and as they rested on his, Torlinn wondered whether they could read his mind. He didn't need to wonder for long, as the magician whispered with a look of mutual understanding :

"It might be wiser to make a stop before nightfall . Before we get completely lost."

"Yes. We better set up camp under these branches rather than wander aimlessly until morning."

"We shall camp here" he said. "But where is Podus ?"

With a start the young woman looked behind her.

"I... his pony was galloping close to the mine ; I was talking to him a moment ago ... I don't understand !"

A scream enlightened them, which they recognised as the high-pitched voice of Podus and meant that he was not far off. But it was a scream of anguish. Torlinn drew his long sword out of the scabbard in a fierce gesture. He was about to spur on his mount when the neighing of a horse was heard, followed by the beat of hooves. The dwarf suddenly appeared out of the darkness, shaking in the saddle, his sallow face contorted. He had some trouble bringing his mount to a halt beside his companions, the animal appearing to have experienced the same fright as the Podus himself.

Still brandishing his blade, Torlinn grabbed the reins of the pony, with his free hand and calmed him down, clicking his tongue as was his habit.

"What are frightened of midget ?" he asked, flexing his arm muscles.

"A huge thing was... crouching in the thicket" mumbled Podus.

"It flew up to the tree tops ; I could only make out a movement in the branches but I distinctly heard a flapping of wings".

Torlinn the Brute broke into a boisterous laugh.

"A night-bird ! Our midget nearly died of fright after startling a common owl."

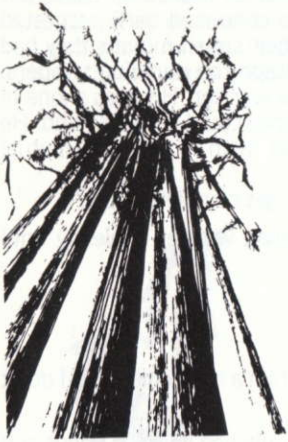
"Big as you are", the dwarf snarled, "You might serve very well as a feast to such an owl."

Torlinn sneered. The magician interupted :

"Podus may very well have driven away some dangerous creature. Warrior, are you ignorant of the rumours concerning the feathered fauna of Scarg ?"

"This does not trouble me, old man. In Rohnkreld, we do not pay much attention to those legends... And if indeed there is such a thing as a fauna, with all due respect to Podus, I shall be the one to feast on them."

"I once read in a wizard's book the description of blood-sucking, flying monsters", Gelth added.



"That's enough, you accursed magician, you are going to frighten Dame Syrella for no reason! Let's set up camp without more ado, and if by chance any kind of creature decides to come and suck our blood, this sword would make short work of spreading them."

"What about your magic, Gelth?" the young woman enquired. "Can't it bewitch the creatures of darkness?"

"I don't know. I will place charms around our camp and speak the magic words. I hope it will be enough to ensure our safety. But this forest has such bad reputation."

"As for me," muttered Podus, "I place more confidence in your spells than in the strength of this stupid pack of meat."

Torlinn refrained from crushing the grinning face of the dwarf. He shrugged his broad shoulders and applied himself to the task of starting a fire.

THE VAMPIRES ATTACK

They had dined on dried meat and were lying near the fire, on a bed of leaves. Torlinn had fallen into a deep slumber and exhaustion had got the better of his three companions'anxiety.

Syrella sat up suddenly in the middle of the night, her heart beating quickly. She looked into the darkness, beyond the dying embers. She was partly reassured by the barely perceptible shapes of the horses. The feeling of a nearby presence which had awoken her might have been caused by the restlessness of the nervous animals who were straining at their tethers. She started, if the horses were restless it meant that they sensed something... She moved closer to Torlinn, touched him on the shoulder, whispering his name. The warrior jumped to his feet and let out a shrill cry .He was up in an instant, sword in hand, and shook his head as he looked about, bewildered.

"What is it ? Where..."

He was puffing like a Fardalie grampus, which caused everybody to wake up. Podus the dwarf was looking mockingly at the gigantic fellow who was slowly recovering his composure. "I see that midgets are not the only ones to get very scared", he sneered. Torlinn growled like an angry bear.

"Dame Syrella surprised me in the midst of a dream of love", he mumbled. "I was in a suomptuous manor, courting passionately the lady of the house. Then just as you, Gentle Lady, startled me out of my sleep, the lord of the manor and his soldiers were breaking into the bedchamber."

The young lady eyed the barbarian contemptuously.

"Torlinn, you disappoint me."

"But, my Lady, I can't bear being disturbed in that kind of a dream, and..."

"Let us dismiss the subject", she cut him short, "more serious business is at hand. I feel uneasy in my mind : the horses have been restless and I feel as though I am being watched, that 's why I wanted to wake you up."

Torlinn went to the horses, stroked them, and spoke to them. When he joined his companions again, his brow was knotted with worry.

"Indeed these animals are very frightened. Their hides are shivering although the night air is mild, their jaws are chattering convulsively. I have never seen horses in such a state..."

"Listen." Gelth interrupted. As they stopped talking they heard noises now coming from the dark high regions of the forest, probably from above the trees. There was no doubt that the noise was a fluttering of wings, as if hosts of winged creatures were flying close to the tree tops. The horses were huddling together, shaking.

In the light of the dying fire, sweat could be seen streaming down Podus's face and the dwarf could be seen gripping the breeches of his master the magician. Torlinn stepped up to Syrella's side, his long sword ready to defend the long frail figure. He was again the arrogant warrior confident in his valour.

"Your old wives tales may be worth paying attention to, magician. It seems to me as though, these creatures were swooping down on us. If their flesh is not too revolting we shall eat fresh meat tomorrow ! ha ! ha ! ha !"



The fluttering drew closer, Gelt looked askance at the laughing Barbarian.

"You won't be amused for long, Torlinn the Brute." he whispered. "Here comes the Winged Tribe of Skarg which all wizard's books agree is imprevious to most speels."

"The steel of my blade will do the work if your magic proves powerless, old man."

The first flying creatures dived onto them, heralded by a shrill whistling. It happened so fast that they could only make out a huge dark mass falling like a rock from the tree tops. Gelth and Podus rolled on the ground, stunned by the flap of the bird's wing. But Torlinn had time to strike. He had a fleeting sensation of tearing through a thick elastic membrane. And, in fact, the thing, thrown off balance, shrieked hideously and crashed into the nearby thickets, with a great noise of branches breaking. Torlinn started shouting out orders :

"Podus, take my axe from my saddle and see if you can distroy this one ! Syrella, Gelth, try to light torches and stay near the fire."

The dwarf complied, handling with difficulty the axe which was taller than he was and plunged into the darkness. The young woman and the magician did their upmost to inflame resin-coated stakes, but a second attack did not give them time to do so. Several monsters loomed out of the darkness simultaneously, uttering ear-splitting whistles. Syrella threw an armful of flaming torches at the one that swooped on her, forcing him to swerve. Gelth cast a magic spell intending to paralyse (the sensitive functions) of the giant vampires. There was indeed a moment of confusion among the assailants which enabled Gelth to barely avoid being hit by one of them, and Torlinn to strike two with a great swirl of his sword. The monsters fell with a frantic beating of their wings, roaring in a way fit to curdle the blood of the most courageous. The warrior rushed forwards to hack the two black hairy bodies to pieces, and a moment later the ruddy wings stiffened in death.

Podus emerged from the deep night all spattered with purplish blood ; a triumphant grin twisted his thick lips. In action his fear had left him and he outgrew his diminutive size. He shivered though, when the vampires attacked once more all together. In a confusion of shrieks and whistles a dozen monsters, perhaps more, appeared, coming from all sides.

Torlinn cut off two horrible heads, then was struck violently on the rignt shoulder by a wing, which made him drop his sword. Immediately another monster swooped down on him, pinning him onto his back on to the damp ground. He felt the weight of the creature oppressing his chest, strong claws mauled his sides. The huge membranous wings closed on him, a slobbering and filthy snout came down on his face. A foul breath suddenly nauseated him. Sharp fangs were reaching for his throat, small red eyes sunken in folds of scaly skin were already relishing their victory... Torlinn managed to free his hands and catch hold of the vampire's neck. His fingers tightened, his muscular arms tried to push back the frightful gargoyle, but the monster surpassed him in sheer strength, and the repulsive snout kept slowly closing on Torlinn's contracted face. Then, with a final outburst of rage, the warrior released his grip and quickly pushed his thumbs into the demoniacal eyes fixing him. The red globes burst, soiling Torlinn with a mixture of blood and viscous humours. His fingers dug deep into the sockets while the creature moved its wings convulsively. Seizing his opportunity the barbarian gathered together his energy and punched the monster hard on his warty forehead : the rather thin skull cracked, a thick whitish fluid oozed out of the scalloped ears and stinking nostrils of the vampire. The great winged body softened, and Torlinn slung aside what was now a carcass.

Confusion prevailed around him. Syrella's screams restored to him enough strength to grab his sword and hasten to the rescue. The young woman was lying in the same position he had experienced ; a vampire was smothering her with its weight, ready to tear her tender breast. Farther away Gelth found himself in the same position. But already Podus, axe in hand, was perched on the monster's filthy back, intent on hacking away at his master's assailant. With lightening speed Torlinn disengaged Syrella after thrusting his blade into the back of the vampire who was crushing her. The sharp edge pierced the heart. Torlinn had to leave the unfortunate young woman in order to kill the three vampires still circling above them. The work finally done, he held against him the half-fainted woman and together they surveyed the extent of the slaughter. Eleven mutilated monsters lay strewn on the ground. Gelth was lying unconscious in a puddle of blood and ichor, and Podus, kneeling beside him, moaned and wept on the mangled chest of his master.

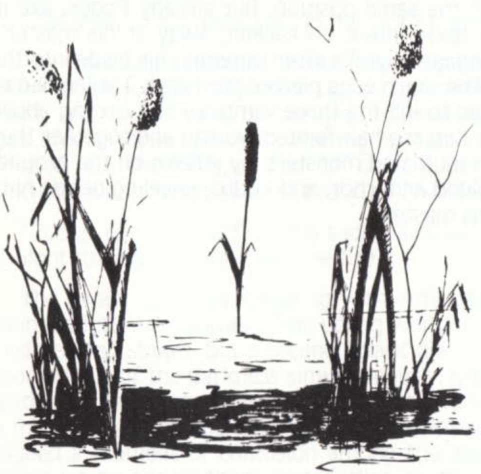
QUEST FOR THE HEALING RUSH

Syrella, who was miraculously unhurt, was recovering consciousness in Torlinn's arms. He let her go as soon as she was able to stand by herself and squatted beside Podus still prostrate on the lifeless body of the magician.
"You fought valiantly, midget !" he said gruffly, patting the dwarf on the shoulder. "As for poor Gelth, there is not much we can do for him.."

"Wait !" Podus cried out his tearful face lit up. "His eyelids have moved... Yes, there now, he is opening his eyes !"

The dwarf was right. Gelth's eyes went from Torlinn back to his servant again. His lips parted ; Podus put his ear close to them to hear the thin murmur issuing from them. He straightened up a moment later, looking determined, he said : "There is not a moment to loose, let us build a stretcher."

"What did he say ?" enquired Torlinn. "His are fatal wounds, for the bite of the vampires of Skarg is deadly. The only remedy is an enchanted rush growing on the shores of the Great Inland Sea. We have to go and look for it. Until then, Gelth will try to stay alive on the strength of his magical power. For the time being this is the only thing which can hold his body and soul together and he claims he can survive several days this way. Nevertheless we have to hurry, for the sea is far away and our progress will be difficult." Dawn was just breaking. They built a stretcher out of branches and creepers, and laid Gelth on it as comfortably as they could and harnessed it to the gentler of the horses. Torlinn led him by the briddle and went ahead. Syrella and Podus, riding their poneys, brought up the rear. So the small procession tried to find their way out of the forest. Soon they were lucky enough to find a small hill. Podus climbed it to get his bearings. Still unable to see anything through the luxuriant vegetation he hoisted himself to the top of a pine which was taller than all the others in height. Torlinn was growing impatient when the dwarf, with monkey-like agility, let himself down to the ground. Like a look-out man he described what he had just seen from the crow's nest. "The edge of the forest is not far off ; within five leagues there is a stretch of deserted pasture land and beyond, what I believe is the sea..." "What direction is this ?" the warrior grumbled. "That way !" "Toward the mossy side of the trees, is it ? So, to the North. And what else did you see ?"



"There is forest everywhere, with several hills like this one." "Well then, let's head North. And if you did see the Great Inland Sea we shall be able to heal our precious magician before nightfall."

"I don't think it can be right", Syrella interjected.

"The Great Inland Sea stretches very far to the East. In these parts it can only be the Smaller Sea, as I see it."
"It doesn't matter whether it is small or great, it is the medicinal rush we are interested in !"

"I am familiar with the shores of the Smaller Inland Sea", the young woman went on. "I have often visited them. No rush grows there, healing or otherwise ; the only flora of these coasts is the sea-holly."

"First of all let us leave this infernal forest. If you are right, Dame Syrella, we will turn eastward later on".

Torlinn led his companions to the edge of Skarg Forest and then through the more peaceful grasslands beyond, where they began to relax. The sun was setting behind the mountains which closed on the horizon and after making sure that nothing but prickly plants grew on the shores of the Smaller Sea, they headed East. For a long time they kept close to the smooth waters and did not stop to sleep until after dark. Their rest was not disturbed by any evil creature. On two occasions only did Gelth's groans of pain cause them any anxiety. Early in the morning Torlinn, who was noisily stretching his limbs, froze in surprise : at a short distance from their camp he saw some tall and roughly cylindrical stones, which were arranged in a circle. To his mind, still hazy from the night's slumber, this structure suggested the impressive cromlechs of his distant country, the Land of Rohnkreld. Musing, he walked towards the megaliths. Inside the circle his feet trampled on fragments of pottery, bones and cut flint. On one of the stones that was upright was an inscription, carved in runic characters. Podus and Syrella had joined the barbarian and were bending over the inscription.

"It was so dark when we stopped for a halt," Torlinn said, as if apologizing, "that we did not suspect the immediate presence of this cromlech. If Gelth were valid, he would decipher the message which might prove interesting."

"I can", Syrella declared. She concentrated. After a minute she exclaimed :

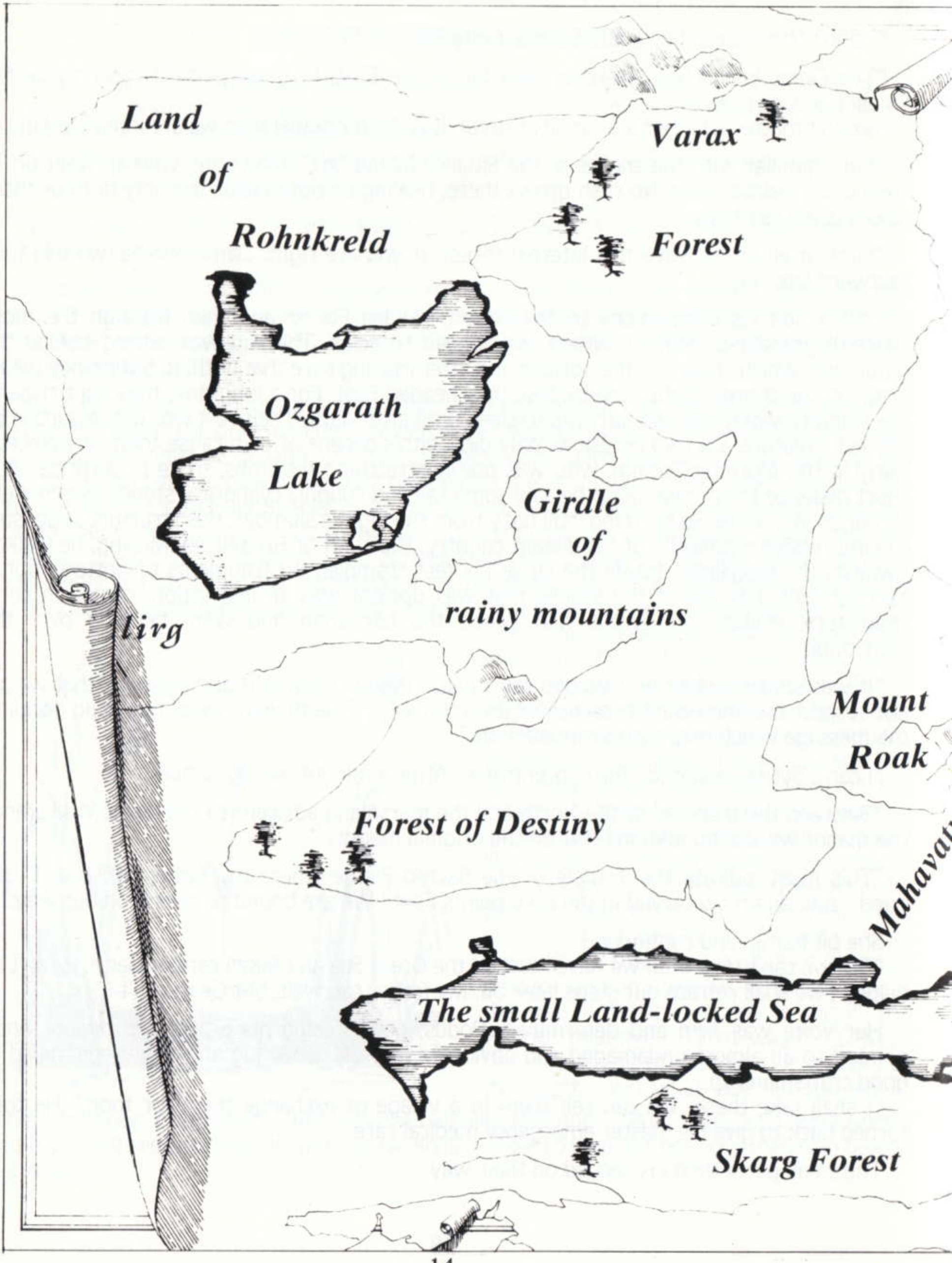
"Between the marshes of the North and the marshland adjacent to the Magic Wall stands the manor whose foundations rest on the original magma."

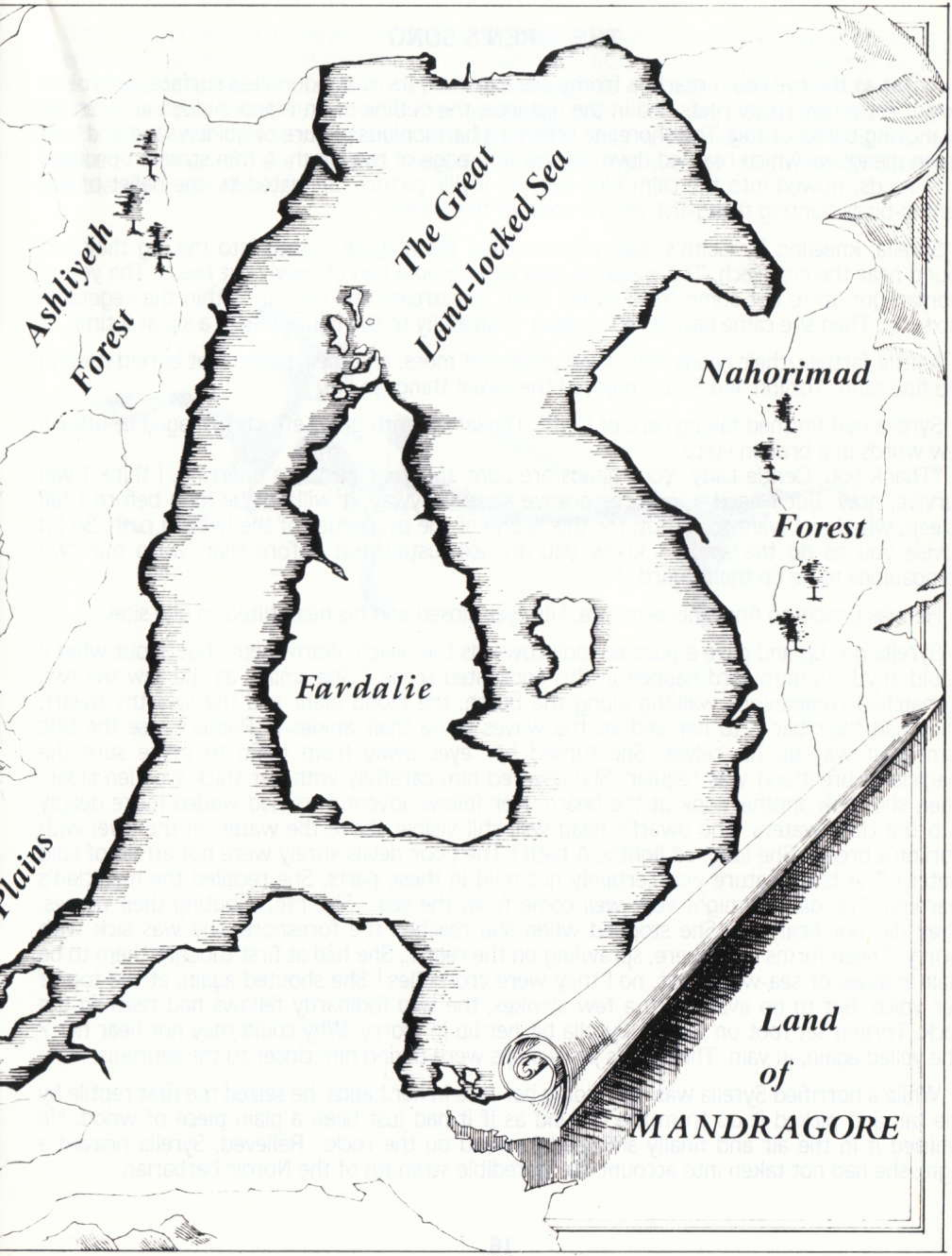
"This must indicate the Temple of the Sacred Flame where my father officiates !" she cried. "And an arrow carved in the rock points East ! We are bound to pass it on our way."

She bit her lip and continued :
"But we can't stop until we have reached the Great Sea and taken care of Gelth. It can't be helped ; we shall retrace our steps later on. My father can wait, but Gelth can't !"

Her voice was firm and determined. Podus, never losing his practical common sense, pointed to an almost undamaged and obviously very old stone jug and a flint spearhead of good craftsmanship :
"I shall take these. We can sell them in a village or exchange them for food." He then turned back to give his master emergency medical care.

The small party then proceeded on their way.


Land
of
Rohnkreld
Varax
Forest
Ozgarath
Lake
Girdle
of
rainy mountains
lirg
Mount
Roak
Forest of Destiny
Mahavat
The small Land-locked Sea
Skarg Forest



Ashliyeth
Forest
The Great
Land-locked Sea
Nahorimad
Forest
Fardalie
Plains
Land
of
MANDRAGORE

THE SIREN'S SONG

As far as the eye could reach, a frothy sea extended its even boundless surface, unbroken except for a few rocky reefs and in the distance, the outline of an island, hidden at intervals by moving banks of fog. The shoreline offered a harmonious picture of golden sand and lush green meadows which reached down to the very edge of the beach. A thin stream bordered with reeds, flowed into the calm blue sea. An idyllic picture, animated by the ballet of the fishing-birds hunting flying-fish on the crest of the waves.

Syrella, kneeling by Gelth's side, was crushing the magical rushes into the jug they had found near the cromlech. The magician was resting on a bed of newly cut reeds. The young woman got up to get some fresh water from the stream and used it to thin the vegetable mixture . Then she came back to administer it carefully to the injured man, a sip at a time.

A little farther, their heads resting on pillows of moss, and their naked feet buried deep in the fine sand, Torlinn and Podus enjoyed the sweet things in life.

Syrella had finished taking care of Gelth. The latter, with great effort, managed to utter a few words in a broken voice :

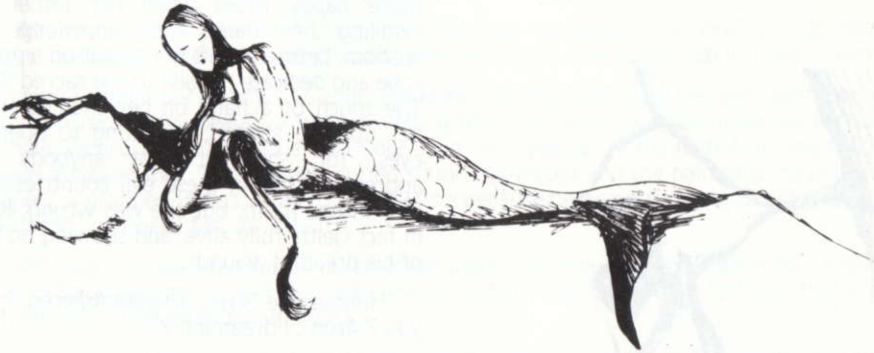
"Thank you, Gentle Lady. Your hands are light and your gestures unerring. I think I will survive, now. But I need a long restorative sleep. Anyway, it will not be long before I fall asleep, whether I want to or not, for this is one of the properties of the healing rush. So I'd advise you to do the same. I know you are exhausted. But before that, warn our two companions to be on their guard..."

He was unable to finish his sentence. His eyes closed and his head tilted to one side.

Syrella got up and gave a puzzled look towards the beach. Warn them.. but about what ? Could anything untoward happen in this enchanted scene ? She smiled as she saw the two ill-matched companions walking along the beach, the blond giant and the swarthy dwarf. They had their backs to her and let the waves tickle their ankles-in Podus's case the tide came half way up his calves. She turned her eyes away from them to make sure the magician's breathing was regular. She covered him carefully with her thick woollen cloak. Then she took another look at the beach. Her fellow-adventurers had waded more deeply into the clear waters. The dwarf's head was still visible above the water on the level with Torlinn's breast. She laughed lightly. A bath ! The poor devils surely were not afraid of cold water ! The temperature was certainly not mild in these parts. She recalled the magician's warning. The danger might very well come from the sea... She ran, shouting their names. They did not hear her. She stopped when she reached the foreshore, she was sick with worry. Those forms over there, sprawling on the reefs... She had at first thought them to be plain masses of sea-weed. But, no ! they were crocodiles ! She shouted again, at the top of her voice. But to no avail. With a few strokes, the two foolhardy fellows had reached the rock. Torlinn set foot on it first. Syrella bit her lip in worry. Why could they not hear her ? She yelled again, in vain. The giant's jerky steps were taking him closer to the saurians.

While a horrified Syrella was half hiding her face in her hands, he seized the first reptile by the tail and picked it up from the ground as if it had just been a plain piece of wood. He whirled it in the air and finally smashed its head on the rocks. Relieved, Syrella heaved a sigh ; she had not taken into account the incredible strength of the Nordic barbarian.

The second animal experienced the same fate, without having any chance of using its tremendous jaws. Thinking that the matter had been dealt with, the young woman called to her companions once more. But they remained deaf to her voice, which was sweet, even when raised to a shout. It seemed to her as though their faces were beaming with a rather foolish bliss, as if they were listening to divine music. They were under a spell ! she suddenly realised . Powerless, she watched them dive together into the sea, this time, to disappear completely under the water.



SYRELLA'S DISTRESS

Syrella's strengh had reached its limit of. Several days of travelling, the medical attention she had given the magician, and lastly Torlinn's and Podus's disappearance -all this was beginning to weigh heavily on her frail shoulders. Under that weight she collapsed onto the golden sands. Hunched up, with her head between her knees, she wept. For hours she remained in the same position, sobbing softly over her misfortunes, over the tragic fate of her companions, over the battle against death Gelth now had to fight, over her father... The hope of ever seeing him again was faint indeed. How could she carry her quest through if, to aad to this succession of adverse strokes, the magician could not escape the pangs of death ? Overcome with weariness and grief she finally fell asleep. She dreamt of her childhood, of those happy times when her father was instilling her mind with knowledge and wisdom, before he left her to put on a priest's robe and dedicate himself to the sacred flame. The touch of a hand on her shoulder woke her up. She started, hesitating to open her eyes, for she felt that anybody who approached her in these evil countries could only intend harm. But she was wrong. It was in fact Gelth, fully alive, and showing no trace of his dreadful wounds.



"Honourable Sage, "she stammered, is that you ? Aren't I dreaming ?"

"Here I am indeed ; the medicine worked wonders. I hardly feel any weakness."

A brief gratified smile lit up the face of the young woman while tears welled up again in her pretty grey eyes.

"Oh ! do you know that Torlinn and Podus..."

"I know, but dry your eyes, Fair Lady, for here they come !"

She jumped to her feet, astounded. The sturdy warrior from the North was coming out of the water holding Podus in his arms as one carries a sleeping child. His staggering walk and haggard face indicated that he was about to collapse. As indeed he did, as soon as he had laid down the dwarf on dry sand between Gelth and Syrella. The young woman knelt beside the panting barbarian.

"By what prodigy did you manage to stay alive under the water all this time ? What happened to you ?"

"Let him recover, Gentle Lady", Gelth advised. "Here and now I can tell you they have been with the Sirens. If they had not come back, I would have tried to use teleportation to carry me underwater and extricate them from the clutches of these she-devils ; but I might well have failed because my powers have not yet been fully reactivated."

Meanwhile, the man of Rohnkreld was vigourously shaking his heavy head, tossing his long blond hair. He then heaved a sigh like the roaring of an ogre.

"Aaarrh ! How is the dwarf ?"

"He seems to be coming round", Gelth answered.

"Those delightful women's songs", Torlinn resumed."Did you hear them ?"

"I for one could not be bewitched, "the magician explained, "the healing rush having plunged me into a state of narcosis. And besides, only men are susceptible to their charm."

"I cannot remember clearly", Torlinn continued. "On the bottom of the sea I saw a sunken ship. I can recall very beautiful women with golden hair and fish-tails, undersea corridors and halls where I could breathe as freely as in the open air. I think that at one time an octopus attacked me... One tentacle curled round my throat and the pain must have broken the spell... I grabbed Podus, I had to use my fists because he was struggling to get free, and I rose to the surface as fast as I could."

"I am happy to see the four of us together again", Syrella declared cheerfully. "Now we can turn back and try to find the castle mentioned on the runes ! And to think that a few moments ago I had given up all hope !".

Torlinn allowed himself time to hunt the rabbits which abounded in the vicinity and to go fishing.

Thus supplied with food, the four friends went back the way they had come.

BREAKING UP OF THE PARTY

At dusk they came within sight of the manor . Syrella could no longer control her eagerness. But Gelth suggested that they set up camp and send one of them to reconnoitre.

Torlinn quite naturally offered his services. He ate and drank in company with the other three after which he set out on foot for the famous castle, his sword at his belt and his terrifying axe on his shoulder.

In the moonlight the fortified manor assumed a lugubrious but by no mean impressive appearance, for it had a squat and stocky construction which looked embedded in the ground, like a knoll.



Around a peat fire Syrella and her two companions waited for Torlinn's return. Worried, they talked for a while, admiring the starlit sky, and then tried to sleep. They were getting really concerned about their friend when frightful shrieks broke the night's silence. To the right, to the left, and behind them. They hardly had any time to think. The spectres were already attacking. There were three of them -three indefinite white shapes vaguely human-like, which seemed to float in the air. Podus and Syrella pulled out their daggers. With lightning speed Gelth uttered the magic formula calculated to bewitch any sort of creature. One of the ghosts disintegrated. Syrella tried to stab the other two, but in vain. At last, the magician succeeded in making them disappear like their mate.

"I have always believed in ghosts", Syrella murmured, shuddering in retrospect. "But I have never seen any until now".

"I don't like the look of it at all", grumbled Gelth.

It was not long before his fear materialized. Sickening shrill cries were heard. Putrid smells infected the air. The shades of night parted to make way for a group of repulsive beings dressed in dark rags. Their sallow faces, veritable caricatures of human features, appeared to be in a state of decay : their black eyes were expressionless and they were stretching before them fleshless arms.

"The living-dead !" Gelth exclaimed. "Keep away, my friends, they are invincible. Only the Black Art has any power over these abominations."

Podus did not have to be told twice. He took to his heels (which is easier to do for a dwarf than for a normal human being), and rushed blindly into the darkness.

Several monsters were close on his heels. Syrella ran away in the opposite direction, while

Gelth blocked the way to the main body of the ignoble host. She ran like a gazelle, her black hair streaming around her head. She only stopped when she was nearly fainting. She was choking and whimpering. She felt she was wading in the mud of a bog and realized she must have run over a league. It required all her willpower not to succumb to despair and sit down among the reeds and sob. She shook herself to loosen the grip of terror which threatened to overpower her, looked for a dry place to sit and tried to make herself look as inconspicuous as she could. Far in the night, sinister calls still echoed, frightful moanings and indescribable squakings.

Syrella waited until morning, shivering with cold and anxiety, wrapped up in her cloak. She surveyed the scene stretching before her eyes in the wanning light of dawn. The mysterious manor was just a tiny russet spot barely distinguishable in the background of the unnamed mountains. She turned her head to the right. Beyond more unknown and impassable ridges lay . The sun was just starting its daily course in the azure sky. She thought of her companions scattered in this inhospitable country ... dead perhaps, the three of them. A slight movement attracted her attention. She was not mistaken : a lean figure was moving towards her. On her guard, she grabbed her long knife. Could it be..., When it came closer, she relaxed. Gelth at least had escaped. She walked up towards him. They were soon facing each other.

"Why are you threatening me with this weapon, Gentle Lady !" the magician murmured. His eyes gleamed strangely.

"Forgive me, Learned Magician, I did not recognise you immediately . Have Torlinn and Podus not reappeared ?"

"No, they have not. I fought victoriously against the Living Dead, then teleported myself inside the manor to see what was going on for myself and join the barbarian of Rohnkreld.I left in haste. Dame, this is not the place you are looking for. It is nothing but a den of diabolical creatures, where one can wander indefinitely without being able to find a way out. Torlinn must have perished there by now."

"Couldn't you have attempted to rescue him ?"

A strange smile fleeted across the magician's face :

"It seemed more urgent to find you, Fair Lady ! And this I did by the magic trick of repeatedly visualising the surroundings. Now I will lead you to where your fate is driving you", he sneered.

Syrella raised her eyebrows enquiringly. All of a sudden Gelth's voice changed into a hideous snarl and, eyes glowing like live coals, he growled :

"In these parts, the Great Master Yarod-Nor has taken possession of my soul and from now on I am subservient to his schemes. Obstinate female, I will now turn you into a sow !"

The young woman started back, aware that the evil forces of the manor had got hold of the magician. But she repressed her fear and reacted so quickly that Gelth had no time to carry out his threat. She plunged her dagger, up to the hilt, into the heart of the possessed man. An awful gurgle came out of his throat and the traitor collapsed without silently. Syrella wiped the blood which stained the blade and replaced it in the sheath.

A look of cold determination hardened her features. So the message of the runes was a lie, no doubt left there by the emissaries of the Powers of Evil. So her companions had forsaken her one after the other : one had run away, another was dead, another had betrayed her. So she was entirely alone this time.

Well, that need not stop her. She would continue on her quest without anyone's help, even if that meant travelling the length and breadth of these immense countries, walled in by the magic mountains.

She recovered her horse and her equipment, and by the isthmus of Shuran which seperates the two seas, she left the hostile countries of the South.



RULES OF THE GAME

MANDRAGORE

Once upon a time there was a distant land which existed peacefully under the benevolent reign of good King JORIAN of MANDRAGORE . However one day tragedy struck, a shower of shooting stars fell on the countryside and one of these stars killed King JORIAN.

Immediately a Lord by the name of YAROD-NOR appeared from nowhere and assumed power, imposing a reign of evil tyranny upon this peaceful country.

In order to free the country from the clutches of this infamous tyrant you must form a team of four characters, whose mission will be to confront YAROD-NOR in his own Chateau.

In order to do this, you must solve each of the mysteries surrounding the nine other Chateaux in the land of MANDRAGORE. A careful look at the stories in the booklet accompanying the game will tell you much about the land of MANDRAGORE, its legends, its monsters, its mysteries ...

A - USING THE PROGRAM

MANDRAGORE consists of two cassettes or one disk.

1 cassette "GAME" (Side one and Side two are identical).

1 cassette "CHATEAUX".

The cassette "CHATEAUX" includes on side one Chateaux C0 to C4 and on side two Chateaux C5 to C9.

On disk Side 1 = "GAME".
Side 2 = "CHATEAUX".

BEFORE STARTING THE GAME (for Cassette versions only)

Before starting the game you must locate the position of the various Chateaux on the Cassette " CHATEAUX ". To do this :

— Switch on your computer.
— Insert Side 1 of the cassette " CHATEAUX " in your tape recorder.
— Rewind cassette to the beginning.
— Reset counter.

— Type :
CAT for AMSTRAD
LOAD"" for SPECTRUM
LOAD"TRIAL" for COMMODORE
BLOAD"CAS :TRIAL" for MSX

— Press Return or Enter.

— Push the PLAY button on your cassette player then any key.

Once the cassette tape is running, each time the computer finds a Chateau it will display on the screen :

SKIP : C0 for the first Chateau.

SKIP : C1 for the second Chateau
and so on for the five chateaux figuring on each side of the cassette Chateaux. This message may vary according to machine in use.

Then you will have to note down the number on the counter corresponding to the Chateau you have found each time a message appears on the screen.

After doing this with side 1, follow the same procedure to locate Chateaux C5 to C9 featured on side two.

This procedure need not be followed more than once. It enables you to locate each Chateau on your cassette Chateaux.

During the game, the computer will ask you to load a Chateau in order to get inside it. All you have to do then is to insert your cassette into your cassette player with the side containing the Chateau facing outward, rewind the cassette to the beginning and reset the counter then press the fast-forward button until the counter displays the selection number corresponding with the desired Chateau.

The program will then search for the desired Chateau and display SEARCHING C ?. As soon as it has been found the program will display FOUND C ?, if the discovered Chateau is the right one, otherwise the program will display SKIP C ?.

LOADING "GAME" CASSETTE OR DISK

CASSETTE VERSIONS

TYPE RUN" for AMSTRAD.
TYPE LOAD"" code for SPECTRUM.
PRESS SHIFT and RUN/STOP for COMMODORE.
TYPE BLOAD"CAS:", R for MSX

Then Return or Enter and push the PLAY button on your cassette player.

DISK VERSIONS

AMSTRAD : PRESS SHIFT @ and then type CPM and press Enter when the message ICPM appears.
COMMODORE : TYPE LOAD"*", 8, 1.
APPLE : The program loads automatically.
MSX : The program loads automatically.

ANALYSIS OF THE MENU

In a short time the loading screen will appear, followed by a menu :

SYRELA'S ADVENTURE.
YOUR ADVENTURE.
AN OLD ADVENTURE.

As soon as the menu appears press the STOP button on your cassette player.

N.B : To play you need a blank cassette (C10 or more) or a blank disk which will be known as "TEAM".

Select one of the options from the menu using keys ▲ or ▼ and then press RETURN or ENTER to confirm your choice. (1, 2, 3 for APPLE or F1, F3, F5 for COMMODORE).

1) IF YOU CHOOSE THE OPTION : SYRELA'S ADVENTURE

You will play with a previously selected team of four characters, whose characteristics, names, race, occupations and sex, have already been chosen for you.

This option offers a great advantage to beginners in role playing games as it makes it possible to become familiar with the game and to understand the formation of a team . This stage is very important as an introduction for the inexperienced beginner.

2) IF YOU CHOOSE THE OPTION : YOUR ADVENTURE

You must form your own team. A questionnaire concerning each character will appear on the screen. A team consists of four characters and it is up to you to ascribe to each a name, race, occupation, sex, and different characteristics.

a) CHARACTERISTIC

There are six characteristics altogether :

CONSTITUTION.
STRENGTH.
INTELLIGENCE.
WISDOM.
DEXTERITY.
APPEARANCE.

80 points are to be divided between them. From 5 to 20 for each.

You use the keyboard to enter the value corresponding to your assessment of each characteristics. If you want a value below 10 you must confirm your choice by pressing RETURN or ENTER. In other cases confirmation is automatic.

For COMMODORE and APPLE press the Space Bar to increase the value of each characteristics and confirm your choice with RETURN.

If at any time the total of the points exceeds 80, you will have to redistribute the points.

After you have assessed the six characteristics, you can still modify your distribution or go straight on to the choice of race.

b) RACE

Five different races are possible :
DWARF
ELF
MI-ORC
OBBIT
HUMAN

To choose a race, use keys ▲ or ▼ and confirm your choice by pressing RETURN or ENTER. For COMMODORE and APPLE, type the first letter of the selected race.

C) OCCUPATION

This can not be an arbitrary choice as certain occupations require specified conditions.

You have six alternatives :

WARRIOR	No special conditions.
RANGER	His strength must be above 15.
WIZARD	His intelligence must be above 15.
CLERIC	His wisdom must be above 15.
THIEF	His dexterity must be above 15.
MINSTREL	His appearance must be above 15

The choice of occupation is a very important section, as each occupation has its own specific characteristics. In the course of the game, there will be opportunities to use the strength of a RANGER, or the dexterity of a THIEF or the intelligence of a WIZARD.

So it is worth taking some time to consider your distribution of points for characteristics, as these in turn determine your choice of occupation for each character and will have a great bearing on the outcome of the game.

To choose an occupation use keys ▲ or ▼ and confirm your decision by pressing RETURN or ENTER.

d) SEX

Two possibilities are offered to you ! ! !
To choose the SEX, use keys ▲ or ▼ and confirm your choice, or type M for MALE and F for FEMALE.

e) NAME

Type a name with a maximum of six letters and press RETURN to confirm your choice. Keys ◀ or DEL will enable you to change the name in case of error, or if you wish to make any alteration.

f) COLOUR

The graphic display of a character depends on the choice of occupation and sex. It can be improved by modifying the colour with the Space Bar.

If your team includes two wizards, it would be useful to distinguish them by their colour.

When your team is completed, follow the instructions on the screen and the program will load automatically.

3) IF YOU CHOOSE THE OPTION : AN OLD ADVENTURE

This choice enables you to resume a previous game of MANDRAGORE. The method of saving a game is explained in the COMMAND Section below.

Follow the instructions on the screen. The programm will load, and after a while a message will appear on the screen :

INSERT TEAM TAPE (DISK), CODE ?.

You must give a code from 0 to 9, or a letter from A to Z (a code from 1 to 3 for APPLE).

For Cassette versions, Press PLAY on your tape recorder after positioning the cassette to where the previous game was saved.

If you were in mode Village or Map, the game will take up were you previously left off.

If you were in mode Chateaux, the programm will ask you to load the castle you were in by displaying the following message :
INSERT CHATEAUX TAPE SET ON CHATEAU C ? or INSERT CHATEAUX DISK

See paragraph below : TO CHANGE FROM ONE MODE TO ANOTHER

B - THE MODES OF MANDRAGORE

1) "MAP" MODE

The team is symbolised on the screen by a small graphic representation and when the team members move, the Map travels under them.
The screen shows only one part of the land of MANDRAGORE at a time ; it is therefore useful to refer to the complete Map found in the centre of the booklet which accompanies the game.
The various sites you will come across are : plains, forests, hills, swamps, (all passable), the sea (which can be crossed in a boat, provided you have one), mountains (always impassable) and lastly a village or a chateau.

PLAINS	SEA
FORESTS	MOUNTAINS
HILLS	VILLAGES
SWAMPS	CHATEAUX

"MAP" Mode is used primarily to move from one chateau or village to another.

2) "WANDERING MONSTERS" MODE

At any time during a journey (in "MAP" Mode)in the land of MANDRAGORE, you may be attacked by wandering monsters. You will then be in "wandering monsters" mode. You can destroy them in order to continue your journey, or change into "Map" mode but each character on the screen will then loose ten life points.

3) "VILLAGE" MODE

There are over a dozen villages listed in the land of MANDRAGORE . They make it possible to buy (or steal) weapons, torches, food, a boat, or to sell things found in the course of trips inside the Chateaux.

4) "CHATEAUX" MODE

Ten chateaux, each of them consisting of about thirty rooms and dungeons, make up the universe of MANDRAGORE. Each conceals a mystery to be solved, as well as treasures to be found. There are also monsters and many traps to escape from.

5) TO CHANGE FROM ONE MODE TO ANOTHER

To enter a VILLAGE when you are in "MAP" mode, you must position yourself on the square symbolising a VILLAGE and type V.

To enter a CHATEAU when you are in "MAP" mode, you must position yourself on the square representing a CHATEAU and type C.

Depending on the circumstance you may have to load the data relating to the Chateau (file C0 to C9). Then follow the instructions that appear on the screen. (Cf USING THE PROGRAM)

A few moments later you can begin your visit to the Chateau.

To change into "MAP" mode while in another mode, type M.

— Warning : this last command does not always work. It is valid only in certain rooms and in certain circumstances !

C - COMMANDS

1) REVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS

The following function keys make it possible to carry out a complete review of the characteristics of characters 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as an inventory of carried objects :

F1, F2, F3, F4 for MSX

F1, F3, F5, F7 for COMMODORE

S1, S2, S3, S4 for AMSTRAD and SPECTRUM (S means SHIFT)

CTRL W, CTRL X, CTRL Y, CTRLZ for APPLE

To return to the display screen of the game, press any key.

The display screen you will be viewing is as follows :

CHARACTER	Nº	NAME
OCCUPATION	RACE	SEX
LEVEL		LIFE

CONSTITUTION
TRENGTH
INTELLIGENCE
WISDOM
DEXTERITY
APPEARANCE
EXPERIENCE
MONEY FOOD

INVENTORY

1	3
2	4

Every carried object has a number which appears on the screen.

N.B : Each member of the team begins the game with :

50 LIFE POINTS
20 FOOD POINTS
50 MONEY POINTS
00 EXPERIENCE
LEVEL 1

The higher the level of a character the more invincible he is and better able to undertake hazardous and difficult deeds.

2) SPECTRUM AND MSX

The function key F5 for MSX and SHIFT 0 for Spectrum allows you to see the following details of the four characters on the side of the screen :

Their number
name
experience points
life points

as well as the objects present in the room, opposite the letters A, B, C, D which make it possible to shorten the instructions (See paragraph **SYNTAX AND VOCABULARY**).

The display of this information will only be interrupted when you press the function key a second time.

3) MEETING OF THE CHARACTERS

The following function keys make it possible to get hold again of the characters 1, 2, 3, 4.
F6, F7, F8, F9 for MSX.
S5, S6, S7, S8 for AMSTRAD and SPECTRUM (S means SHIFT).
F2, F4, F6, F8 for COMMODORE.
CTRL A, CTRL B, CTRL C, CTRL D, for APPLE.

These commands will only apply when the members of the team have been separated. To separate a team see paragraph PRACTICAL ADVICE.

4) WHEN YOU WISH TO STOP PLAYING

*** MSX, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM**

— type HELP and Press Return. Then the following
Menu will appear on the screen.
— SAVE AN ADVENTURE.
— LOAD AN ADVENTURE.
— RESUME ADVENTURE.
— QUIT ADVENTURE

You must use keys ▲ or ▼ to choose your option. In order to save the game in progress, choose the first option. A message appears on the screen :

INSERT TEAM TAPE (DISK) CODE ?

For cassette versions press keys REC and PLAY simultaneously on your tape recorder.

Give a save code to your cassette or disk, either a number from 0 to 9 or a letter from A to Z. After a short time the game will have been saved and you will return to the Menu.

The appointed code is the one you will use to reload this adventure when selecting the option LOAD AN ADVENTURE or AN OLD ADVENTURE.

LOAD AN ADVENTURE allows you to return to a previously saved adventure (see paragraph AN OLD ADVENTURE).

RESUME ADVENTURE enables you to return to the game in progress at the exact situation you were in when you typed HELP.

QUIT GAME enables you to quit the game. The message :
ARE YOU SURE (Y/N) ? appears.

Be careful, if you answer Y (yes), you will leave the game in progress and lose all you have done so far if you have not already used the SAVE YOUR ADVENTURE option.

**** COMMODORE AND APPLE**

To save the game in progress type FIN (FINISH) and press Return, follow the instructions on the screen. Give a save code to your cassette or disk, either a number from 0 to 9 (1 to 3 for APPLE) or a letter from A to Z.

After a short time the game will have been saved and you will return to the preceding screen. The appointed code is the one you will use to reload this adventure when selecting the option AN OLD ADVENTURE.

If you do not want to save your adventure, type HELP and press Return . You will come back to the MENU.

D - SYNTAX AND VOCABULARY OF MANDRAGORE

In order to complete successfully the adventure of your team, you have at your disposal vocabulary and syntax specific to Mandragore which will enable you to ask each character to carry out an action. In order to make it easier to use the program, the pressing of keys has been reduced. Moreover, two keys have editing functions :

Key	◀	for	MSX
Key	DEL	for	COMMODORE, SPECTRUM and AMSTRAD

make it possible to delete the sentence in progress.

Key	▲	for	MSX
Key	COPY	for	AMSTRAD
Key	*	for	COMMODORE
Key	"."	for	SPECTRUM

make it possible to repeat the preceding action as many times as necessary (these keys are very useful especially when fighting occurs).

1) DIRECTION INSTRUCTIONS

Direction instructions can be given in any mode (except for "WANDERING MONSTERS" Mode where the only direction instruction is M).You just have to type the first letter of the desired cardinal point (N, S, E, W).Remember that you are always facing North.

2) PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS

The instruction given includes : a subject, a verb with one or two objects.

a) Subject
The name of the character who is carrying out an action is symbolised by a number 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the right hand side of the screen.

b) Verb
You just have to type the first two letters of the verb and it will appear in full on the screen.

c) Object
The first object is symbolised by A, B, C, D (objects visible on the screen) or 1, 2, 3, 4 (carried objects). The second object is symbolised by 1, 2, 3, 4 designating a carried object or the name of a character.

EXAMPLE :

Names of the characters	Objects visible on the screen
1. SYRELA	A. TICKEL
2. PODUS	B. DOOR
3. GELTH	C. BARS
4. TORLIN	D. TABLE

If you type :
1 AT A3 and press RETURN or ENTER, the screen will display :
SYRELA ATTACKS TICKEL WITH SWORD
3 being a carried object not visible on the screen but which can be seen by recalling the characteristics of the first character.

If you type :
2 GI 2 3 and press RETURN or ENTER, the screen will display :
PODUS GIVES CHICKEN TO GELTH
2 being a carried object not visible on the screen but which can be seen by recalling the characteristics of the second character.

If you type :
3 BR C
The screen will display : GELTH BREAKS BARS
You do not have to type prepositions and conjunctions.

VOCABULARY

To explain the vocabulary we shall use the following abbreviations :

C CHARACTER (1, 2, 3, 4)
I INVENTORY (1, 2, 3, 4)
M MONSTERS/OBJECTS (A, B, C, D)
D DIRECTION (N, S, E, W)
N NUMBER (FOOD OR MONEY POINTS)

LIST OF VERBS AT YOUR DISPOSAL :

1 ABSORB		C ABSORBS N
2 BUY		C BUYS M
3 LIGHT		C LIGHTS I
4 ATTACK		C ATTACKS M
	or	C ATTACKS M with I
5 DRINK		C DRINKS I
6 BREAK		C BREAKS M
7 HUNT		C HUNTS M
8 DISARM		C DISARMS M
9 GIVE		C GIVES I TO C
10 SPELL		C SPELLS M
11 EXPLORE		C EXPLORES D
12 HYPNOTIZE		C HYPNOTIZES M
13 INSPECT		C INSPECTS M
14 READ		C READS M
15 EAT		C EATS I
16 PETRIFY		C PETRIFIES M
17 FEED		C FEEDS C
18 OPEN		C OPENS M
	or	C OPENS M with I
19 LAY		C LAYS I
20 TAKE		C TAKES M
21 ASK		C ASKS M
22 CURE		C CURES C
23 PARALYSE		C PARALYSES M
24 TELEPORT		C TELEPORTS D
25 SHOOT		C SHOOTS M
26 BARTER		C BARTERS N
27 SELL		C SELLS I
28 LOOK		C LOOKS D
29 STEAL		C STEALS M

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE VOCABULARY :

You may have noticed that some verbs are used with one or two objects. In such cases the shortened typing will always automatically give the preposition corresponding to the expected second object. If you do not want to use this second object, press Return (Enter).

EXAMPLE :

If you type 1 AT A, the assisted typing will display on the screen :
SYRELA ATTACKS TICKEL WITH

If the attack is performed without a second object, press return immediately.

— The verb CURE only works with a CLERIC.

— The verbs LOOK, TELEPORT, SPELL, PARALYSE, HYPNOTISE, PETRIFY can be used only by a WIZARD.

— The verbs STEAL, SELL, BUY, BARTER only work in "VILLAGE" mode.

— No fighting action works in "VILLAGE" mode.

— The only verbs which work in "MAP" mode are GIVE, FEED, ABSORB, DRINK, EAT and CURE.

— The verb BARTER makes it possible to exchange money for food.

— The verb BREAK is used to open doors and gates by force.

— The verb LOOK makes it possible to see a room without actually entering it.

— The verbs INSPECT and DISARM make it possible to detect and defuse potentially booby-trapped objects.

— The verb FEED makes it possible for any character to use his or her food points to help another in trouble.

— The verb ABSORB makes it possible to lengthen life by means of food points.

— The verbs EAT and DRINK work only for carried objects. It is necessary to TAKE a chicken before it can be eaten.

— The verb HUNT makes it possible to add to your food points.

— The verb SHOOT is always used with an object, the latter being some form of missiles throwing weapons (BOW for example).

— The verb LIGHT makes it possible to get out of difficulty in certain dark rooms.

PRACTICAL ADVICE
SEPARATING A TEAM

One of the main features of Mandragore is that you can separate a team, which makes it possible to visit four different Chateaux or four rooms of the same Chateau at the same time.

To do this, just use the verb EXPLORE with each of the four characters.

EXAMPLE

1 EX N : The first character in your team will go North.
2 EX S : The second character in your team will go South

Do not forget that a team that is separated is not so efficient. Indeed, because each character has its own separate personality, the team adapts itself to suit

the circumstances. A thief will be useful to steal an object, a ranger will have the necessary strength to attack a monster or break down a door.

Moreover, every time you wish to get hold of a character again who is in another Chateau, you must load the Chateau in which he/she is in .

Characters who “meet“ are considered to be grouped again. In order to separate them you must use the verb EXPLORE again.

A character whose life points are nil is considered dead. When all four characters are dead you can continue playing only if you type HELP and load a new adventure.

WE ADVISE YOU TO SAVE AN ADVENTURE AS SOON AS YOU HAVE FORMED A TEAM AS A PRECAUTION. IN CASE ALL THE MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM SHOULD DIE, IT WILL SPARE YOU THE TROUBLE OF RELOADING THE ENTIRE PROGRAM .

To keep a team alive in the land of Mandragore, you must skilfully manage the life, money and food of each character, in particular by selling the riches discovered in the Chateaux or in the Villages.

The verbs used to cast spells (which can only be used by WIZARDS), require particular care, especially at the beginning of the game : the more experienced you become, the easier they are to use.

And now good luck !